

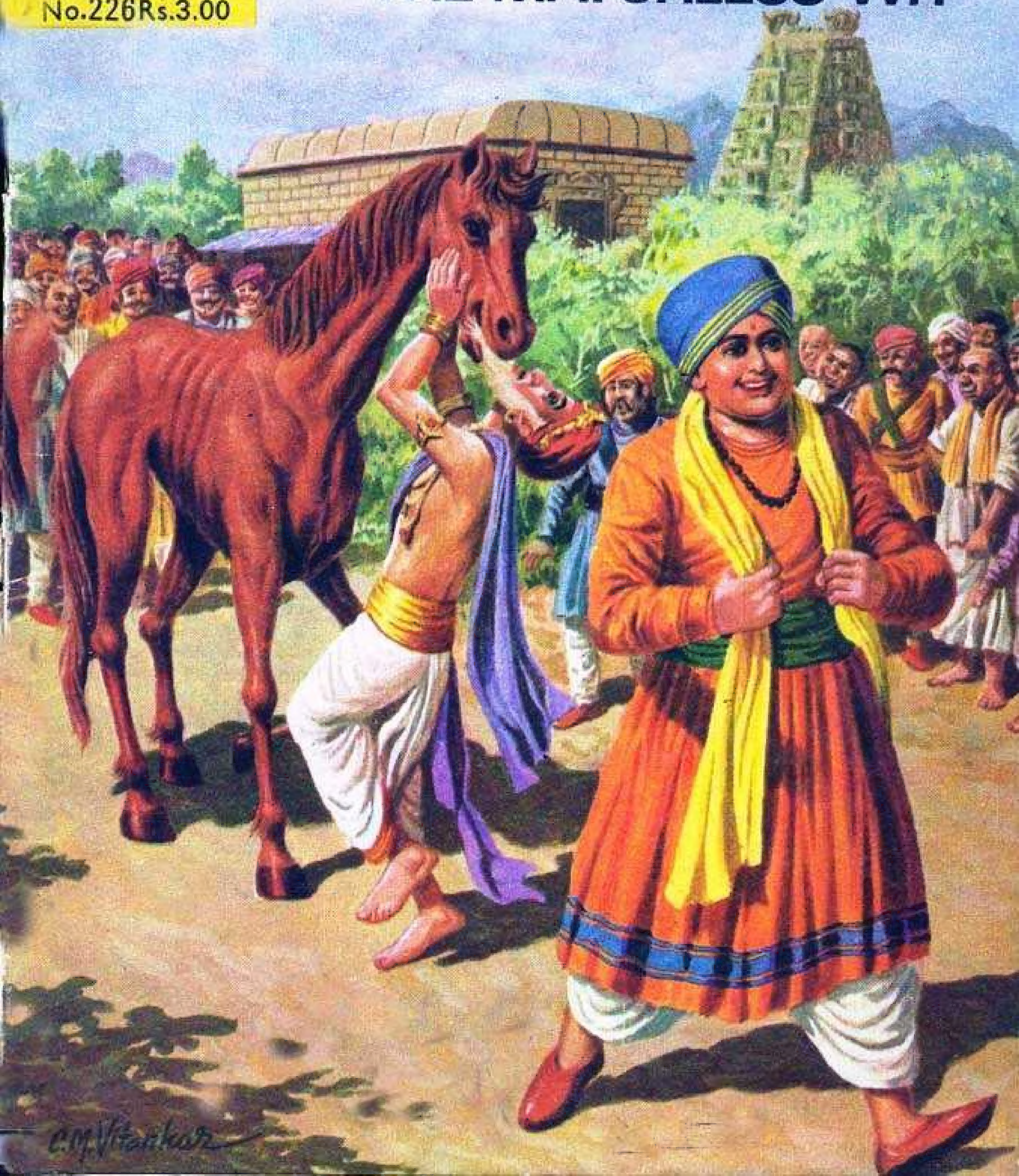
# RAMAN THE MATCHLESS WIT



AMAR  
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# RAMAN

## THE MATCHLESS WIT





The triumph of the little man over the mighty is a recurring theme in literature. Sometimes he does it with a sling and stone, but more often, like Tenali Raman, with nimble wit. He was a Telugu poet and the court jester of Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1529), the emperor of Vijayanagara. Tenali Raman was the Birbal of the South and many stories which have passed into folk-lore, are attributed to him. Some of these are obviously invented to show his ready wit.

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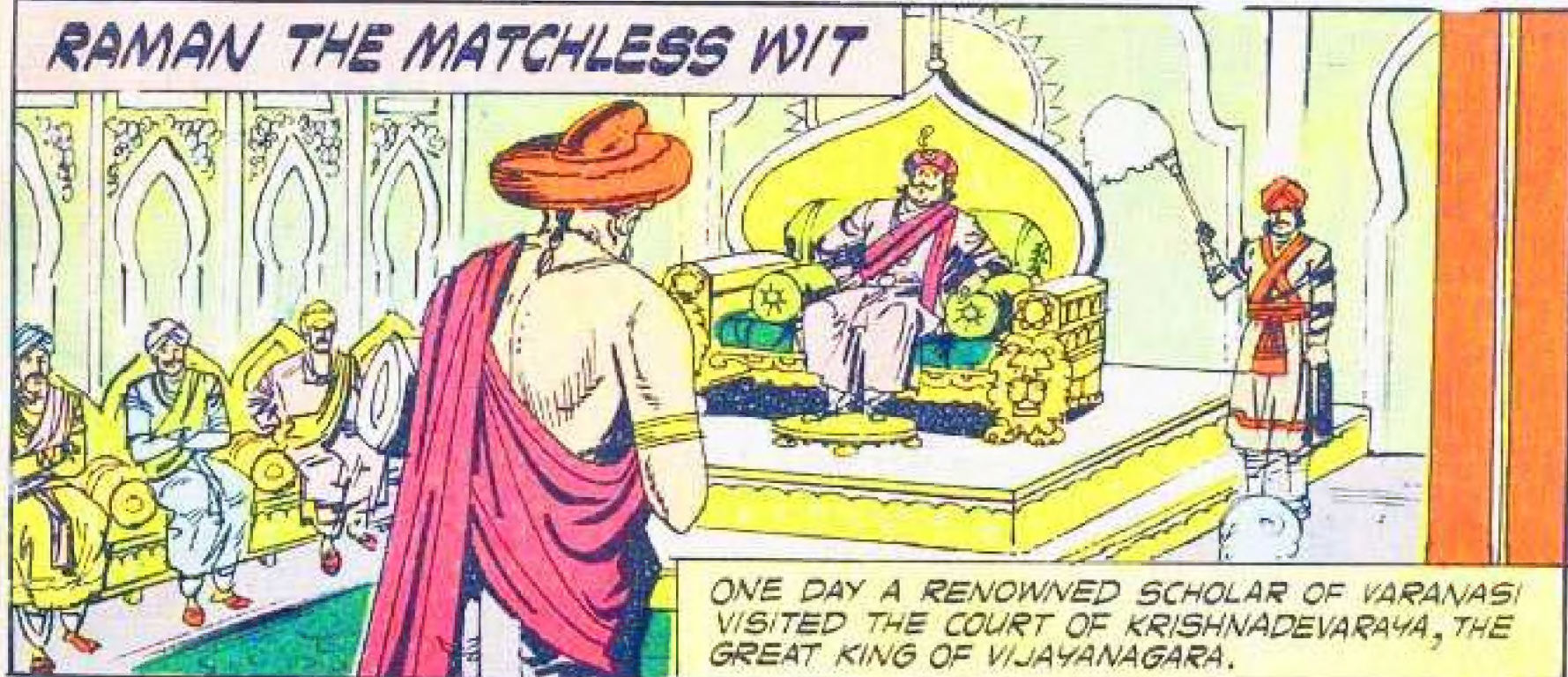
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Published by H.G. Mirchandani for India Book House Education Trust, Rusi Mansion, 29 Nathalal Parekh Marg, Bombay 400 039 and printed by him at IBH Printers, Marol Naka, Mathuradas Vissanji Road, Andheri (East), Bombay-400 059.

**Editor : Anant Pai    Script: Subba Rao    Artworks: Ram Waeerkar**



# RAMAN THE MATCHLESS WIT



ONE DAY A RENOWNED SCHOLAR OF VARANASI VISITED THE COURT OF KRISHNADEVARAYA, THE GREAT KING OF VIJAYANAGARA.

MAHARAJ, I CHALLENGE THE SCHOLARS AT YOUR COURT TO A DEBATE IN ANY BRANCH OF KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR CHOICE.

THE COURT WOULD BE HONOURED TO TAKE UP THE CHALLENGE.

BUT PANDITRAJ, THE LEARNED COURT SCHOLAR, WAS FAR FROM FEELING HONOURED. LATER, WHEN THEY WERE ALONE —

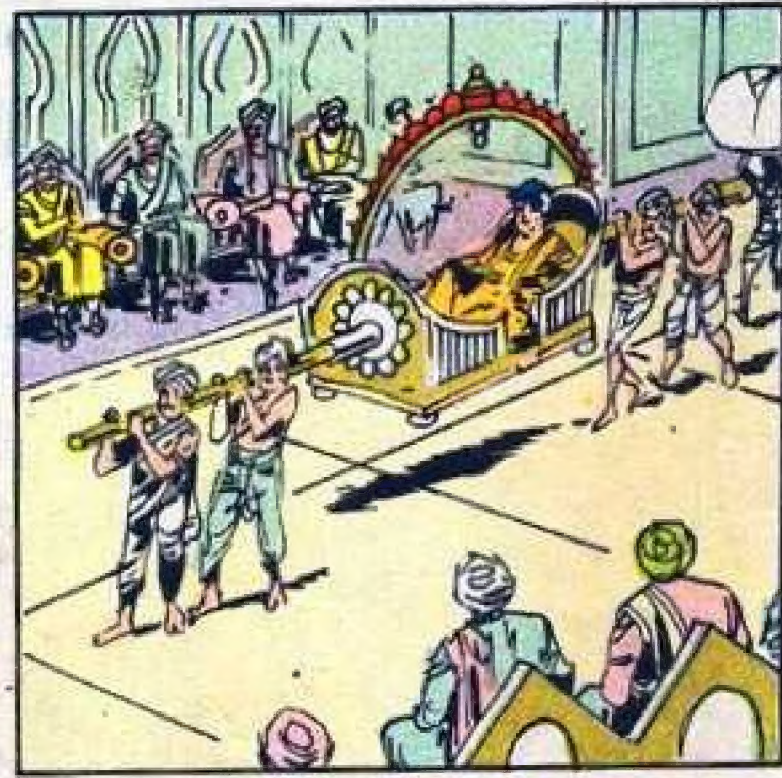
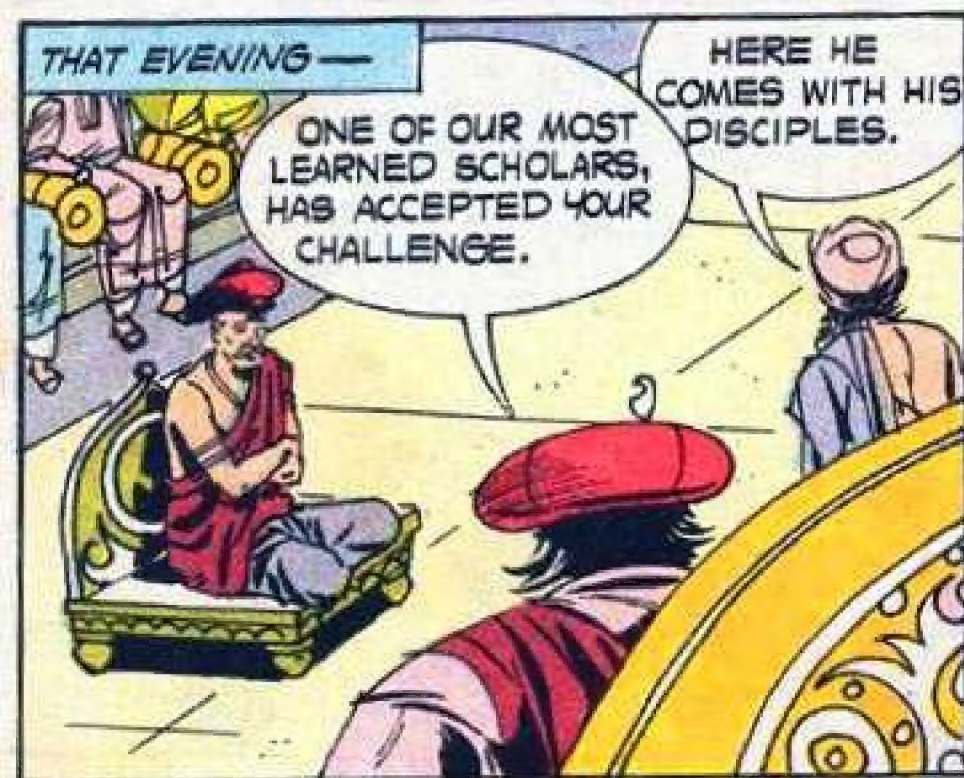
MAHARAJ, WE DARE NOT ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE. I DON'T STAND A CHANCE, NO SCHOLAR IN THE LAND DOES!

DO YOU MEAN TO SAY THERE IS NO ONE HERE WHO CAN FACE HIM IN A DEBATE?

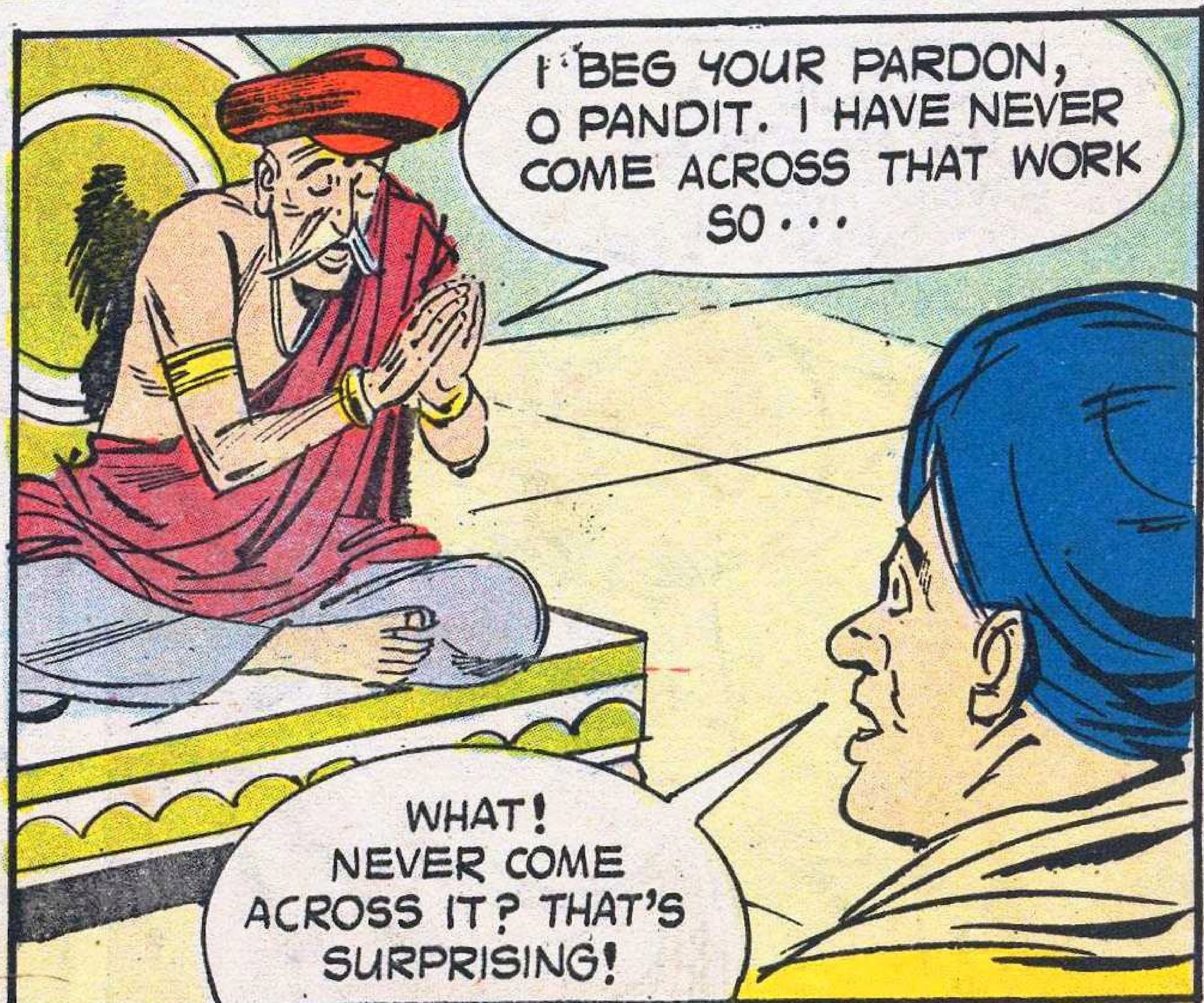
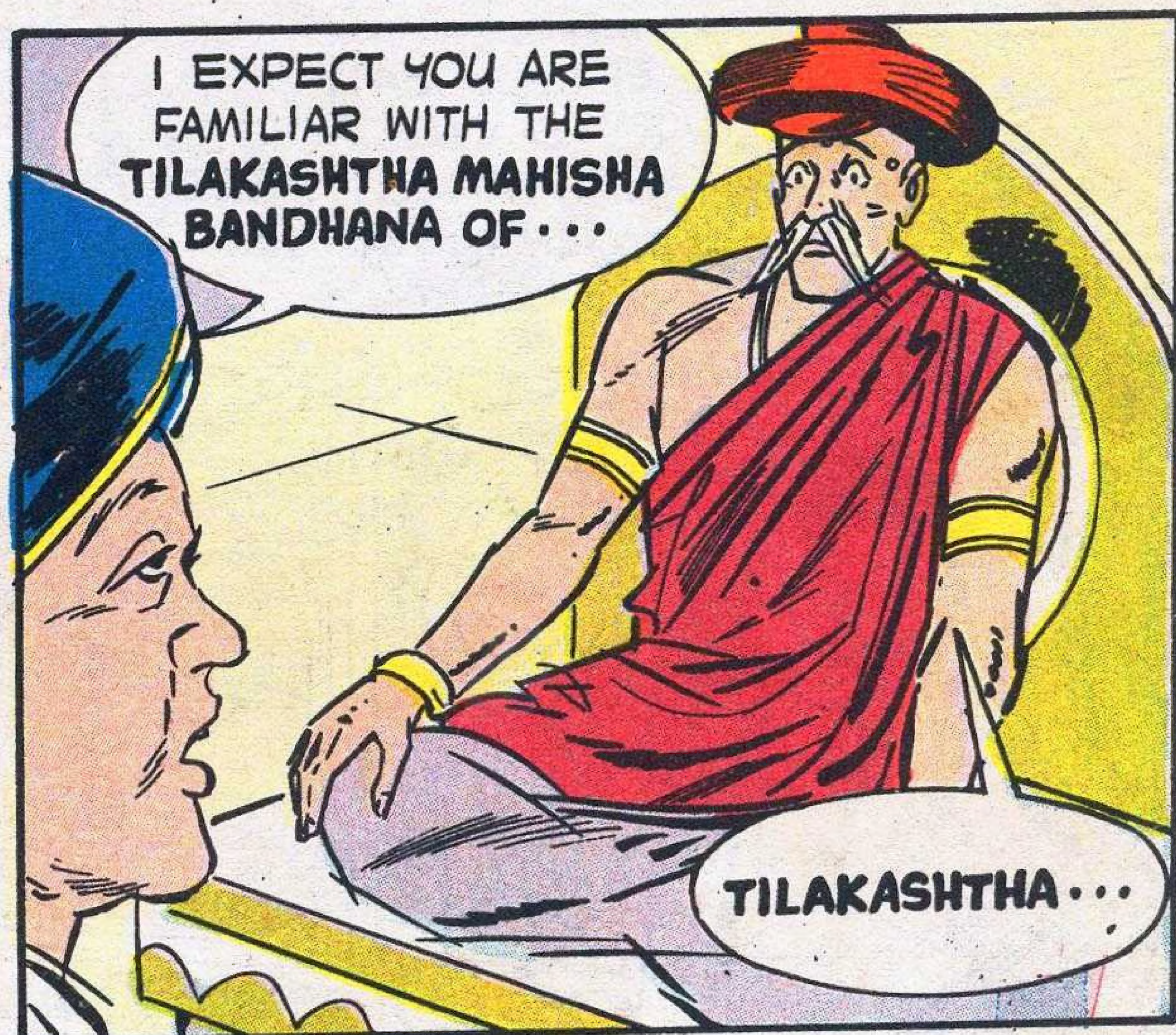
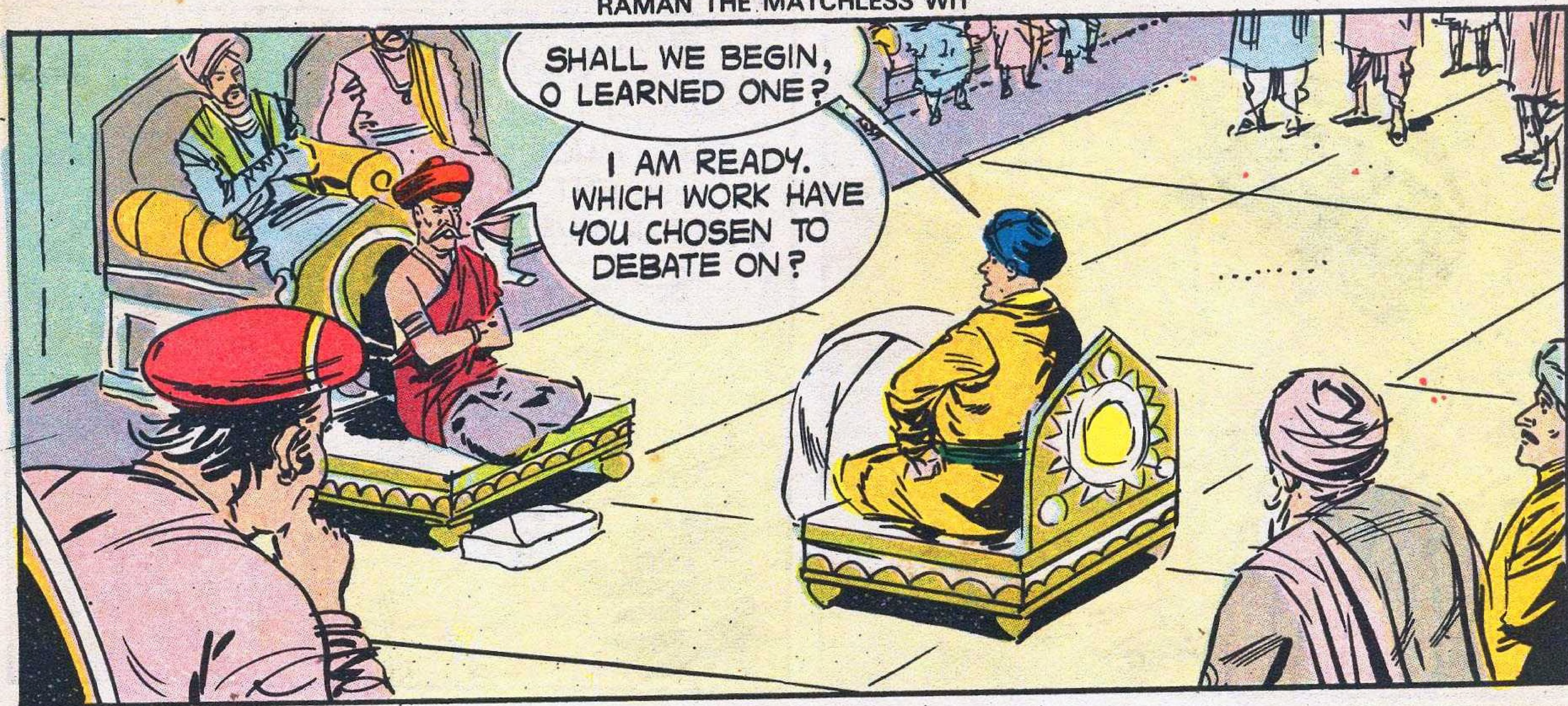
YOU DO, MAHARAJ. I'LL DO IT—THIS VERY EVENING.

IT WAS RAMAN OF TENALI, THE KING'S FAVOURITE AND PANDITRAJ'S DESPAIR.













WHY, EVEN  
COWHERDS IN OUR  
CITY ARE FAMILIAR  
WITH IT!

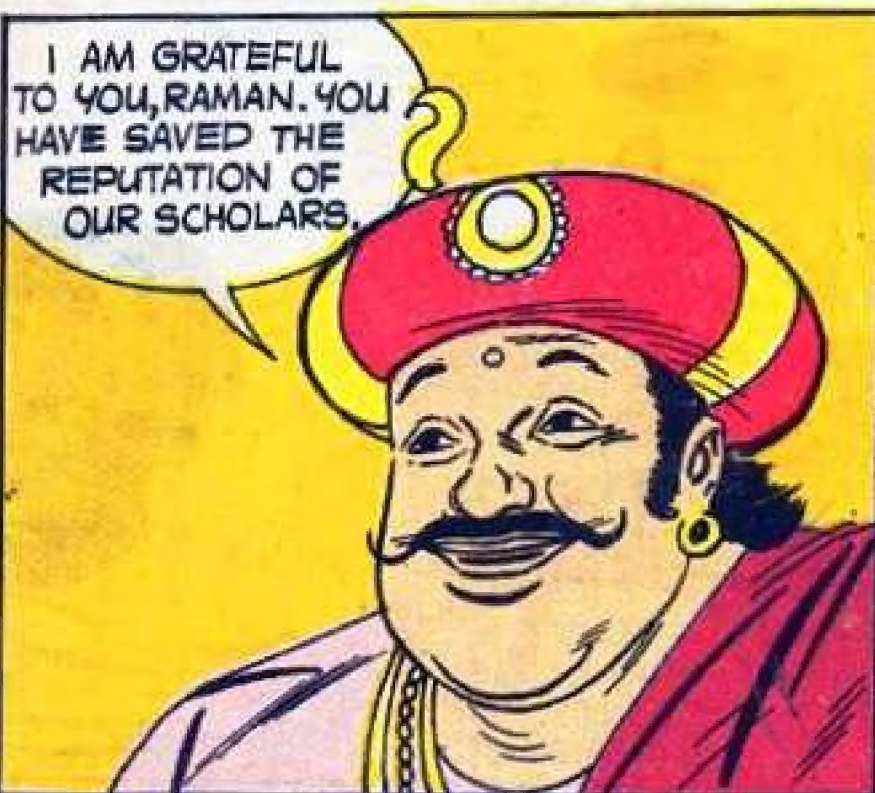


IF MERE COWHERDS  
IN THIS CITY KNOW WHAT  
I HAVEN'T EVEN HEARD  
OF, HOW MUCH MORE  
INTELLIGENT THIS  
SCHOLAR MUST BE!



I ACCEPT DEFEAT,  
O LEARNED ONE. PARDON  
MY ARROGANCE. THERE  
IS MUCH I HAVE YET  
TO LEARN.

AND THE HUMBLE SCHOLAR LEFT THE COURT.



I AM GRATEFUL  
TO YOU, RAMAN. YOU  
HAVE SAVED THE  
REPUTATION OF  
OUR SCHOLARS.



I'M CURIOUS. WHAT  
IS THIS GREAT WORK  
YOU SPOKE ABOUT?  
I MUST CONFESS  
THAT I TOO HAVEN'T  
HEARD OF IT!



RAMAN THEN UNCOVERED HIS BUNDLE.

THESE ARE THE TILAKASHTHAS — STALKS OF THE SESAME PLANT...

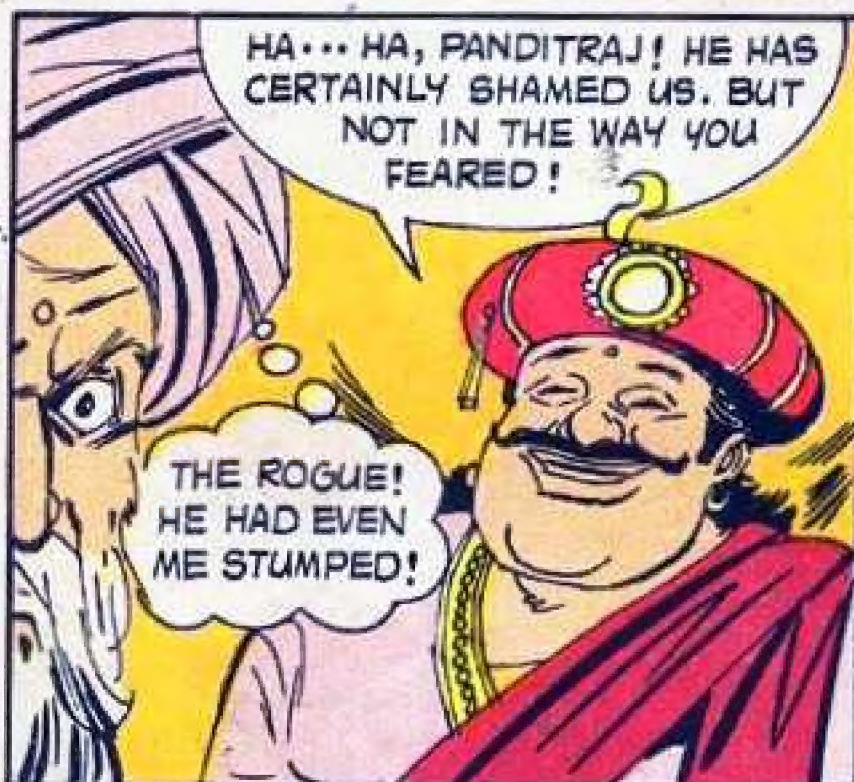


... WHICH I HAVE TIED TOGETHER WITH A MAHISHA BANDHANA — THE ROPE WITH WHICH BUFFALOES ARE TETHERED, SIMPLE ISN'T IT?



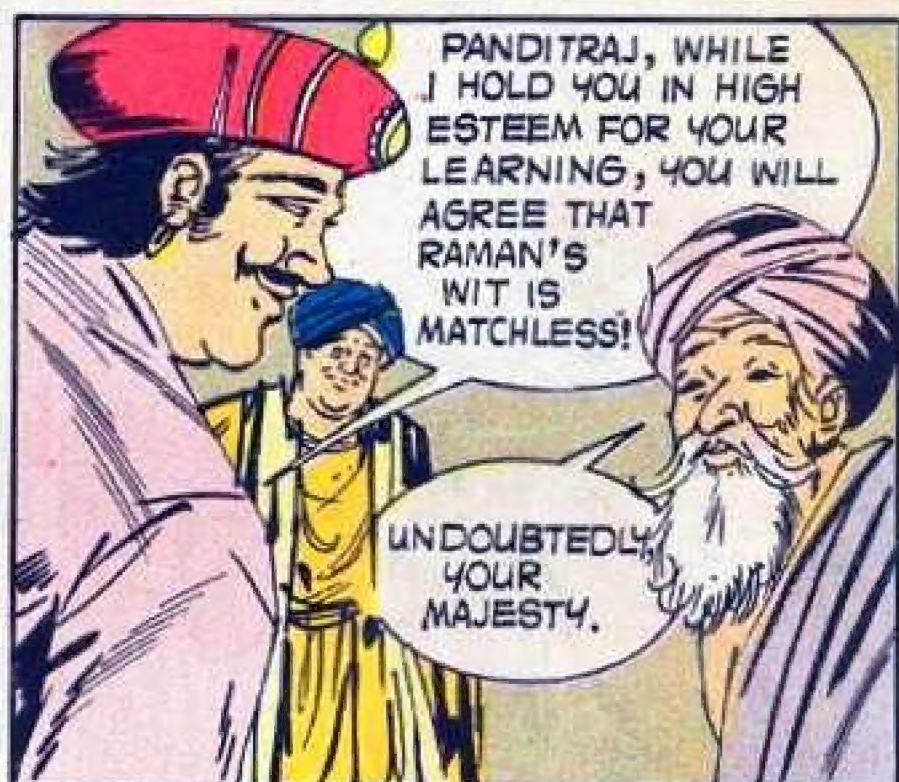
HA... HA, PANDITRAJ! HE HAS CERTAINLY SHAMED US. BUT NOT IN THE WAY YOU FEARED!

THE ROGUE! HE HAD EVEN ME STUMPED!



PANDITRAJ, WHILE I HOLD YOU IN HIGH ESTEEM FOR YOUR LEARNING, YOU WILL AGREE THAT RAMAN'S WIT IS MATCHLESS!

UNDOUBTEDLY YOUR MAJESTY.



AS RAMAN WALKED AWAY THOUGH —

TILAKASHTHA MAHISHA BANDHANA, INDEED! I'LL BIDE MY TIME TO HAVE MY REVENGE.





HE DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONG.

PANDITRAJ, TOMORROW IS MY MOTHER'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY. I FEEL SAD WHEN I THINK OF HER.

YOU SHOULDN'T, MAHARAJ. THAT WHICH IS BORN HAS TO DIE.

THAT I HAVE ACCEPTED. I FEEL SAD BECAUSE I COULD NOT FULFIL HER LAST WISH.

WHAT WAS THE WISH A MONARCH COULD NOT FULFIL?

HER CRAVING FOR MANGOES. BUT IT WAS NOT THE MANGO SEASON. NO AMOUNT OF GOLD COULD BUY A MANGO.

MANGOES! GOLD!

MAHARAJ, I AM SORRY TO SAY...

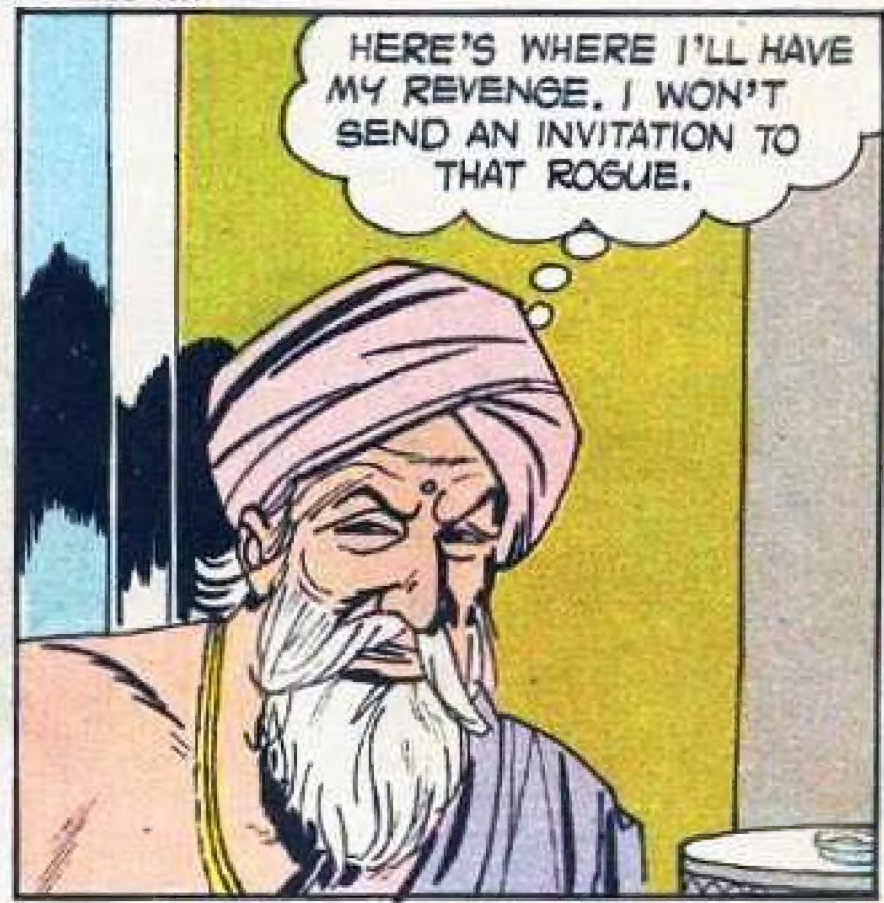
YES? SPEAK UP. PLEASE DON'T HESITATE.

YOUR MOTHER DIED WITH AN UNFULFILLED WISH. HER SOUL WILL REMAIN RESTLESS UNLESS...

UNLESS? UNLESS WHAT?

UNLESS YOU INVITE A FEW VIRTUOUS BRAHMANAS AND...







WHEN THE BRAHMANAS CAME OUT OF THE PALACE —

LEARNED ONES, TODAY IS MY MOTHER'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY, TOO. AND SHE TOO DIED WITH AN UNFULFILLED WISH.



AS YOU KNOW, HER SOUL WILL BE RESTLESS TILL A FEW VIRTUOUS BRAHMANAS AGREE TO...



WE UNDERSTAND, RAMAN. WE'LL COME.

I AM HONoured!



THIS WAY, MY FRIENDS.

I WONDER WHAT GIFTS RAMAN IS GOING TO OFFER US.



RAMAN TOOK THEM TO THE BACKYARD OF HIS HOUSE.

COME, LET ME WASH YOUR FEET BEFORE...

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?



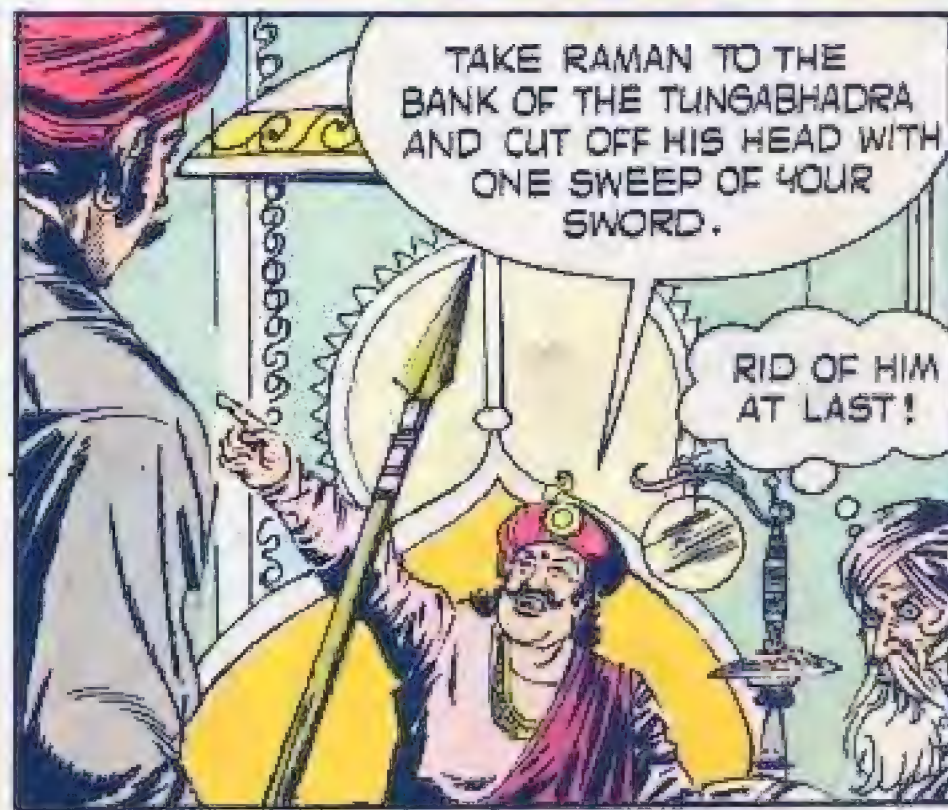
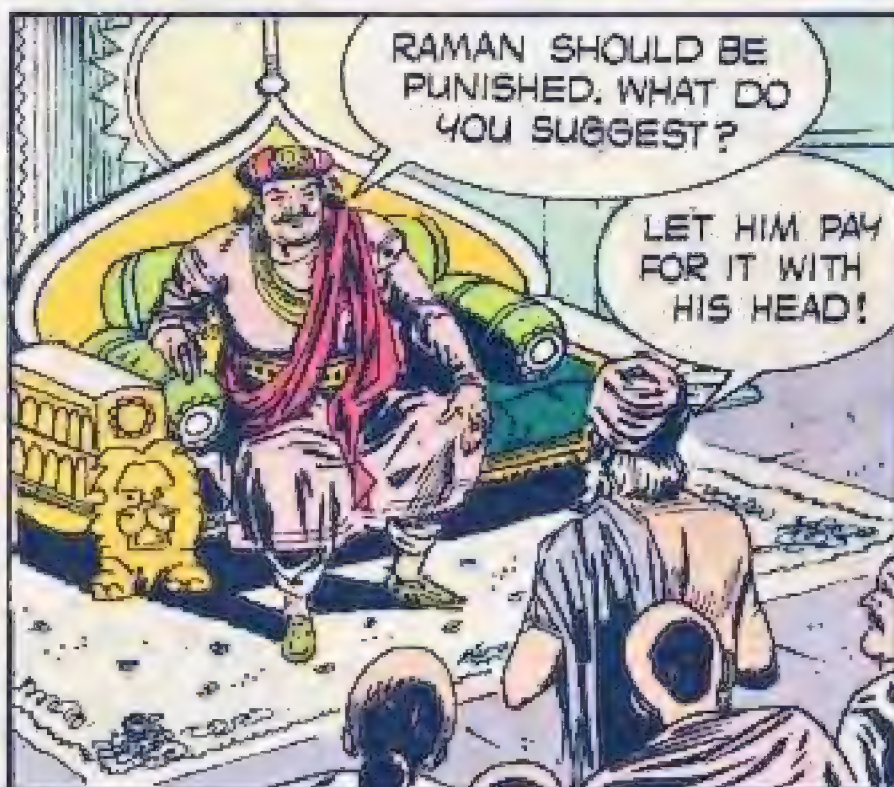


















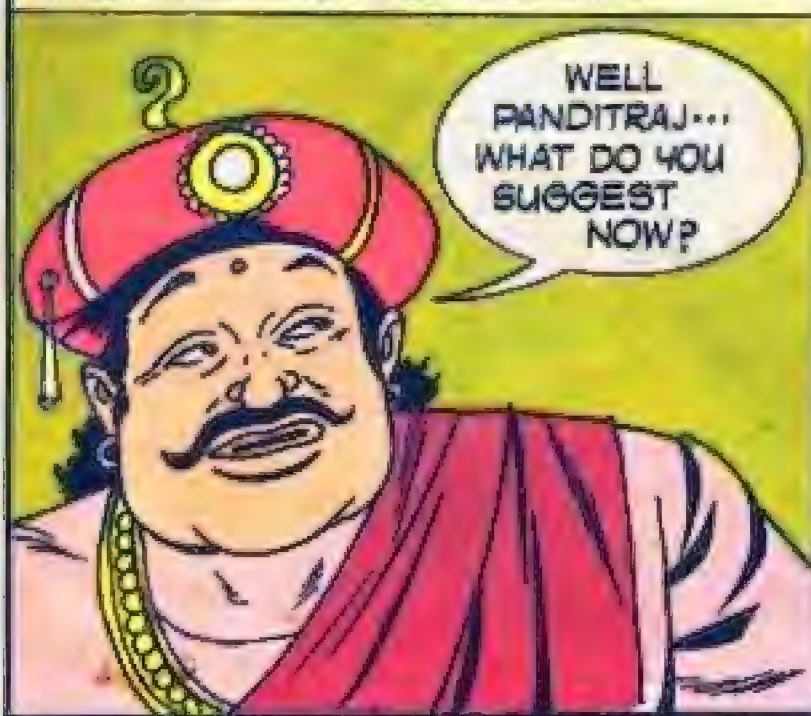








WHEN THE KING WAS TOLD WHY—



THE GUARDS TOOK RAMAN TO THE  
OUTSKIRTS OF THE CITY AND BEGAN TO  
DIG THE GROUND.



AT LAST THE PIT WAS READY.





RAMAN ENTERED THE PIT AND THE GUARDS SEALED HIM IN WITH MUD.



NOW, LET'S HAVE LUNCH AND COME BACK WITH THE ELEPHANT.



AREN'T ONE OF YOU GOING TO STAY BACK AND STAND GUARD?

THERE'S NO NEED TO. YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY.



I WON'T, BUT I MAY BE RUN OVER BY A CHARIOT OR...



HE! HE! HE! HE'S WORRIED ABOUT BEING RUN OVER!



WE WILL SOON PUT AN END TO ALL YOUR WORRIES.

MOTHER KALI, ONLY YOU CAN SAVE ME NOW. IF ONLY SOME ONE WOULD PASS THIS WAY....





AS IF IN ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER, A WASHHERMAN CAME BY.

AM I SEEING THINGS? OR IS THAT THE HEAD OF A MAN?

IT IS! HE MUST BE A YOGI.

THE WASHHERMAN WALKED UP TO RAMAN —

GURU MAHARAJ, I SEEK YOUR BLESSINGS.

THANK YOU, O GODDESS!

MY FRIEND, WHO AM I TO BLESS YOU? I AM AN ORDINARY WASHHERMAN LIKE YOU.

A WASHHERMAN! THEN WHY HAVE YOU BURIED YOURSELF LIKE THIS?

I AM UNDER TREATMENT. I AM A HUNCHBACK.

BUT SURELY, THERE'S NO REMEDY FOR THAT!

THERE IS, MY FRIEND — A SIMPLE ONE. BURY YOURSELF LIKE THIS FOR AN HOUR; AND YOU WILL WALK ERECT.

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.











ON HIS WAY TO THE PALACE,  
RAMAN PASSED THE GUARDS  
WHO WERE RETURNING WITH  
THE ELEPHANT.

HURRY UP,  
THE QUEEN IS  
WAITING FOR THE  
CLOTHES.

THANK GOD!  
THEY HAVEN'T  
RECOGNISED  
ME!

I AM WALKING  
AS FAST AS I CAN,  
SIR.

LATER, AT THE PIT—

AN ELEPHANT!  
I HOPE THE MAHOUT  
CAN SEE ME.

THERE HE IS. SEE  
THAT THE ELEPHANT  
DOES NOT MISS  
HIM.

HE  
WON'T!

MY GOD!  
HE'S HEADING  
FOR ME.



















A MONTH LATER, THE COURTIER'S CAME WITH THEIR HORSES, ALL SET FOR THE RACE.

ARE ALL THE HORSES HERE?

ALL BUT RAMAN'S, MAHARAJ. I KNEW HE...

RAMAN, WHERE IS THE HORSE?

MAHARAJ, IT'S SUCH A FIERCE BEAST, THAT I DARE NOT GO NEAR IT.

I DON'T BELIEVE HIM, MAHARAJ. HE'S ASHAMED OF HIS HORSE. THAT'S WHY HE HASN'T BROUGHT IT.

IS THAT SO?

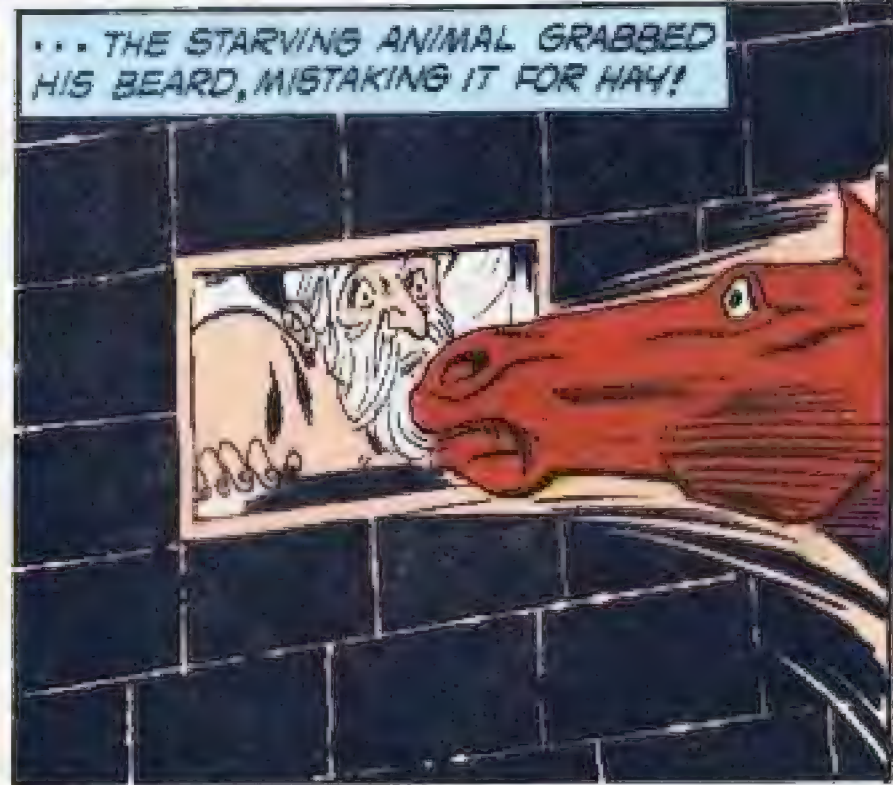
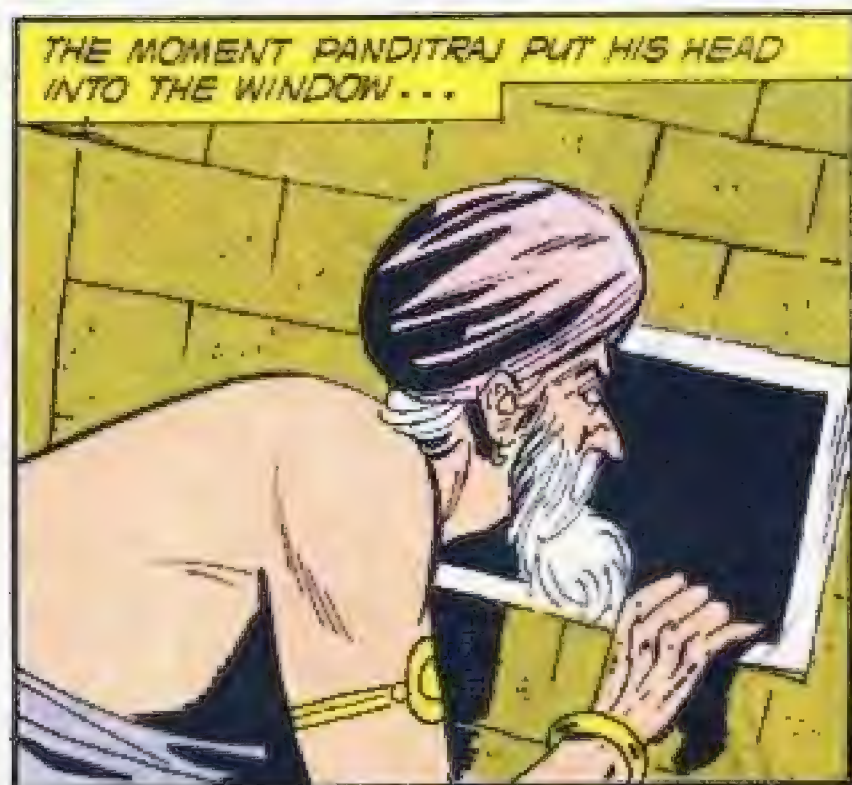
MAHARAJ, I DON'T LIE. PLEASE BELIEVE ME. I DARE NOT GO NEAR IT.

THAT'S JUST AN EXCUSE, MAHARAJ. FOR ALL WE KNOW HE MIGHT HAVE SOLD IT.

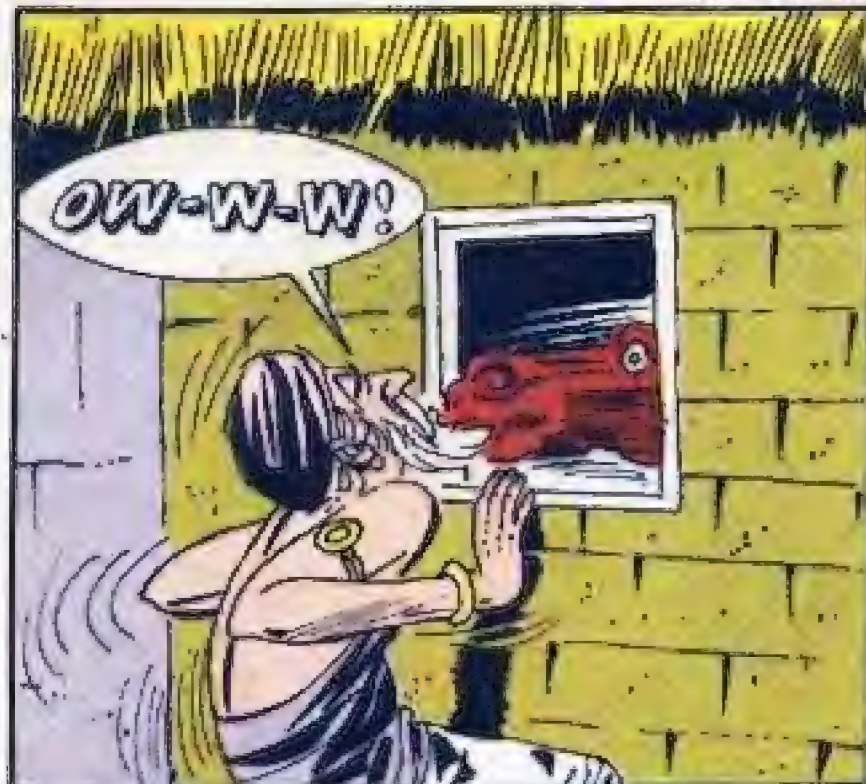
MAHARAJ, I AM HURT. IF PANDITRAJ DOES NOT BELIEVE ME, LET HIM COME AND SEE FOR HIMSELF.

GO, PANDITRAJ, AND BRING THE HORSE HERE.

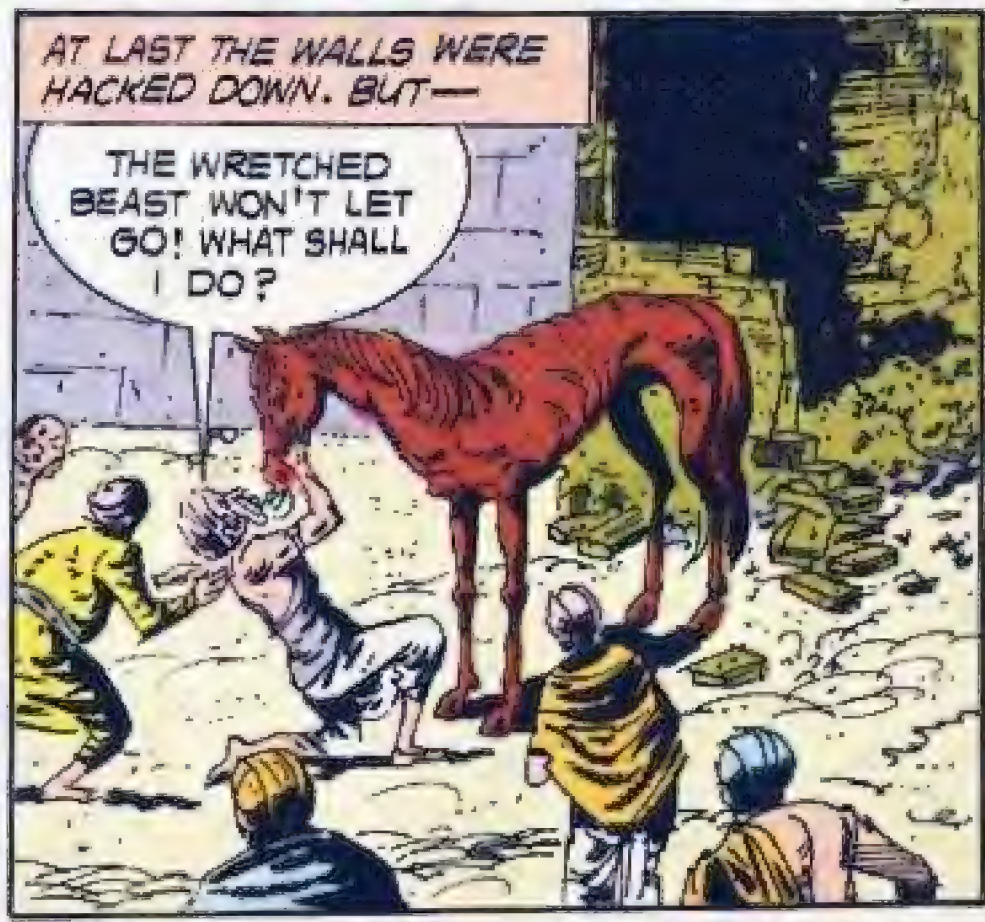








ATTRACTED BY THE COMMOTION, A CROWD SOON COLLECTED.







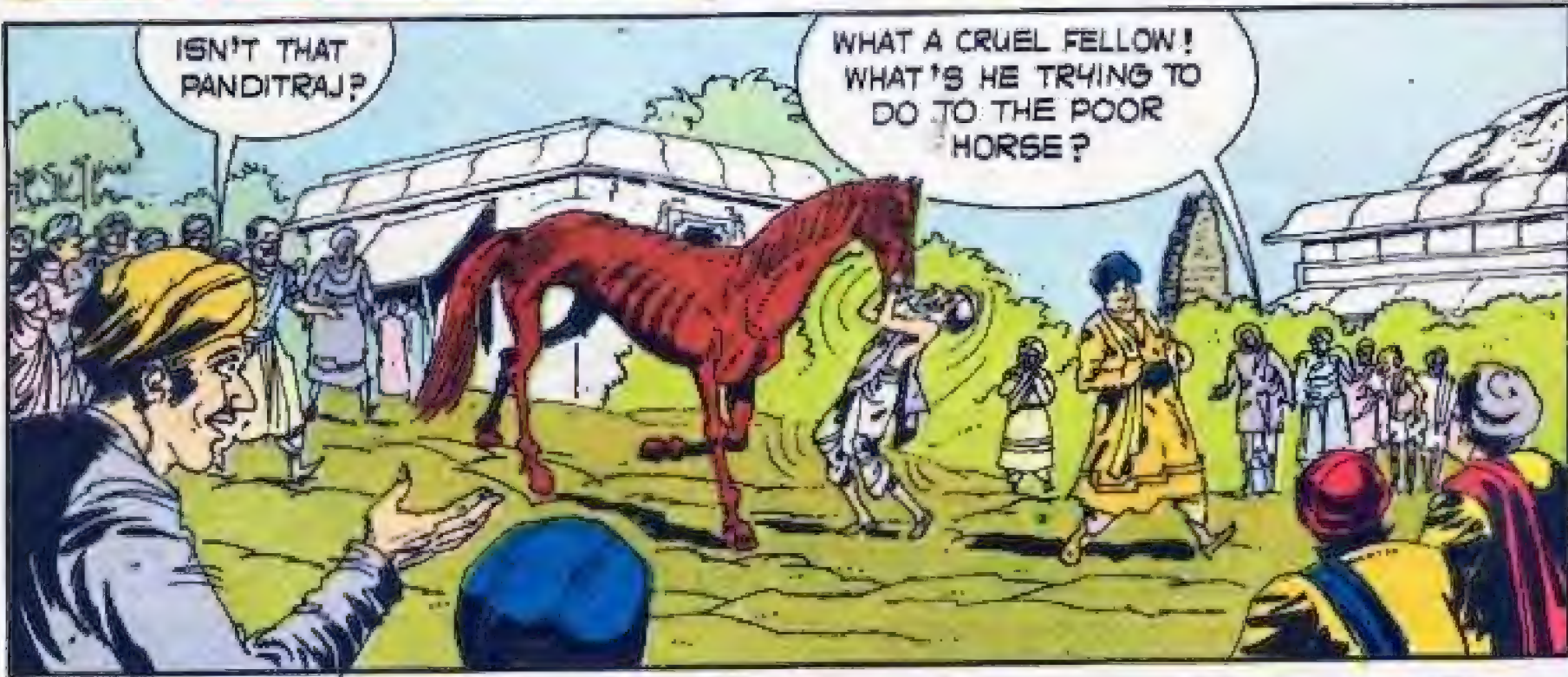
PANDITRAJ, IT'S THE KING'S HORSE. ONLY HE CAN DECIDE WHAT'S TO BE DONE.

AND YOU'VE PROMISED THAT YOU WOULD PERSONALLY LEAD IT TO THE PALACE.



BUT NOT BY MY BEARD!

THERE IS NO ALTERNATIVE. LET'S GO.



ISN'T THAT PANDITRAJ?

WHAT A CRUEL FELLOW! WHAT'S HE TRYING TO DO TO THE POOR HORSE?



AT LAST THE PROCESSION REACHED THE PALACE GROUNDS.

MAHARAJ, MY HORSE.



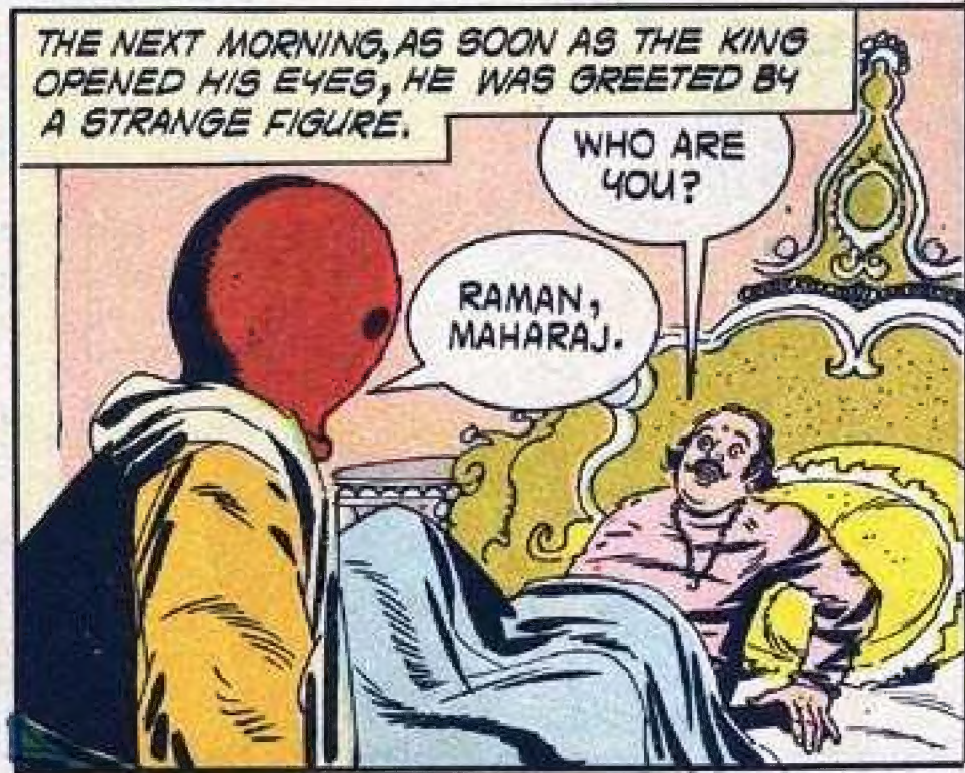
HA! HA! HA!

MAHARAJ, PLEASE RELEASE ME FROM THE JAWS OF THIS VICIOUS CREATURE.











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